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Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism

For more information about bioterrorism and other public health emergencies, visit the Utah Department of Health Web site at: www.health.utah.gov/bt



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PLAN



PREPARE



BATTLING TAKING ON BIOTERRORISM IN UTAH BACK

Battling Back: Taking on Bioterrorism in Utah

What if Utah were the target of an act of bioterrorism? Would you know what to do? Would you be prepared? In our changing world, it's important that we understand and prepare for those things that can harm our health and quality of life. In recent years, bioterrorism has become a greater concern for Americans. Bioterrorism is the intentional release of germs in an attempt to cause fear, illness or death. Most of all, terrorists want to disrupt our way of life.

The Utah Department of Health and its partners are continually preparing to protect the health of Utahns. But Utah's public health agencies need your help. This planning guide can help you do your part to be prepared for bioterrorism as well as natural disease outbreaks. Together we can battle terrorism by taking a few simple steps.



Terrorists want to disrupt our way of life.

What You Can Do

Make an Emergency Plan

Make an emergency plan for you and your family members. This plan should be done before an actual emergency happens. In your plan, include the following:

- Identify ways to stay in touch with family members. Keep important contact information with you.
- Choose an out-of-state contact who you can call to "check in." This contact can then let other family members know that you are safe.
- Pick two meeting places; one near your home and one in another place in case it is unsafe to go near your house.
- Plan for the special needs of all family members.
- Plan for the needs of pets in your emergency plans.
- Know the emergency plan for where you work, including evacuation plans. Make plans for staying at work for an extended period of time if needed.
- Know the emergency plan in your children's schools.
- Write down important medical information for all family members. Include blood type, allergies to medication, current medications and weight, age and height.
- Before an emergency, sign up to be a volunteer. For more information on volunteering, visit: www.health.utah.gov/bt

Have a Mobile Emergency Kit

Prepare an emergency kit containing everything you and your family members would need for at least three days. Keep the kit in a place where you could grab it and go. Consider making similar kits for your car, workplace or children's lockers or desks. Include at least the following:

- One gallon of water for each person per day, for a minimum of three days
- Non-perishable food items (including pet food if you have animals)
- First aid kit, including medication you take on a regular basis
- Clean clothes and sturdy shoes, plus rain gear and coats, hats and gloves
- Blankets and/or sleeping bags
- AM/FM radio, flashlights and extra batteries
- Candles and matches
- Pencil and paper
- Small photo of each family member for identification purposes
- Games and activities for children and adults

In an Emergency

Remember these simple tips:

- Stay calm.
- Stay informed. Write down key information from radio and television.
- Follow instructions from emergency officials.
- Be considerate of others. Everyone will have questions and concerns.
- Check on your neighbors, especially the elderly or people with disabilities.
- Avoid contact with others if you are ill.

Stay Alert

Public awareness is one of the strongest weapons we have in fighting bioterrorism. If you see any suspicious activities, contact law enforcement officials immediately.

Should You Stay Home or Evacuate?

Depending on the emergency, you may be asked to stay at home, evacuate or comply with a quarantine. The following tips can help you prepare for each.

Shelter in Place—Sheltering in place involves creating a safe place in your house where you can stay until the danger has passed. In addition to diseases, such danger could be a release of a cloud of chemicals that can poison people and harm the environment. If you are asked to shelter in place do the following:

- Select a room beforehand that is big enough to accommodate your entire family.
- The room should have a TV or a battery-powered radio so you can stay informed and few windows if possible.
- Bring your family and small pets inside.
- Lock all of your home's outside doors.
- Close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- Turn off air conditioning or forced-air heating systems, exhaust fans and clothes dryers.
- If instructed by public health officials, seal your doors and air vents with heavy-duty plastic sheeting and heavy-duty tape.

Evacuate—If an area is deemed unsafe, officials may ask people to evacuate. If asked to leave your home, do the following:

- Listen for, and follow, directions about where to evacuate and what routes to take.
- Keep your vehicle ready by always having your gas tank at least half full.
- Keep your car windows closed and turn off the air conditioner or heater.
- Take your emergency kit with you.

Comply with Quarantine—If you had contact with sick people, public health officials may ask you to comply with quarantine or stay home for several days or even weeks. Quarantine can be an effective way to keep illness from spreading since it keeps those who might be contagious from spreading the disease to others. To prepare for quarantine, do the following:

- Follow instructions from public health officials.
- Stay away from others.
- Keep enough food and water on hand to last for the entire quarantine.
- If public health officials give you medicine, take it as directed.

